

Sir Walter Raleigh

1552–1618



“Never too much which is never enough.”

—Sir Edward Coke ¹

¹ In Raleigh’s cross examination at the Bar.

I The Trials ²

The details of the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh, and the causes that led to his execution fifteen years after sentence was pronounced and a full pardon granted him by King James, are of absorbing interest. The prisoner was one of the most popular and accomplished cavaliers of Elizabeth's brilliant Court. At the time of Raleigh's trial, the Attorney-General was Sir Edward Coke, whose manner of prosecuting a prisoner at the Bar will not commend him to the reader. Among the letters and other manuscripts that accompany this trial, are indications of the King's bitter enmity against Raleigh, not so much because he was one of the favourites of Elizabeth, whose course towards James's mother (Mary) was appalling, but because of his alleged complicity in the sentence and execution of the Earl of Essex. However, there is proof that Raleigh was in no way instrumental in causing the death of that unfortunate young nobleman. It will also be seen how the enmity of Spain was a potential factor in bringing about the execution of Raleigh. In his first attempt to found a colony in North America around 1579, he was successfully opposed by a Spanish force which required him to return to England; one of the controversial reasons for Spain's conflict, was their jealousy of the presence of the Anglo-Saxon in the Western Hemisphere. Only five years later, Queen Elizabeth granted Raleigh a patent to take possession of the lands he should discover in North America. A second attempt was planned; he prepared two ships, had the braveness and patience to discover Virginia, then returned to England to be Knighted. Furthermore, he was especially active in opposing the Spanish invasions of England, helped to destroy the great Armada, and held the rank of Admiral in the expedition against Cadiz. His career practically ended with the death of Queen Elizabeth since James always regarded Raleigh with suspicion to such an extent, that on November 17, 1603, the latter was tried for high treason and sentenced to death. James did not dare execute the sentence, but kept Raleigh confined in the Tower fourteen years. In March 1615, the prisoner was informed of the success of a suit he had commissioned to Villiers (James's favourite at the time) this brief and dignified letter. "You have by your mediation put me again into the world. I can but acknowledge it; for to pay any part of your favour by any

² Lloyd, State Trials (1899).

service of mine, as yet it is not in my power. If it succeeds well, a good part of the honour shall be yours; and if I do not also make it profitable unto you, I shall show myself exceeding ungrateful. In the mean while, and till God discover the success, I beseech you to reckon me among the number of your faithful servants, though the least able.”³

After Raleigh’s release, he offered to operate a gold mine in Guiana, and made a map of the country for the King showing where it was located. Before his fleet of twelve ships sailed out of the Thames on this quest, of which James seemed to approve at the time, a fleet of Spanish ships had gone on a similar mission. When Raleigh’s men landed on the Island of St. Thomas in the West Indies, they fought several skirmishes with the Spaniards, and Raleigh’s friends claim he found the identical map he drew for James in the closet of the Spanish Governor of the Island. There is no authentic clue as to how it got there. One theory is that it was stolen from England by the Spanish Ambassador to England (Count Gundamor); another is that James himself connived with Spain to convict Raleigh of high treason since at the time, James was anxious to marry his son Charles to the Spanish Infanta. One final theory that has been noted, is that since Sir Robert Cecil was on the Spanish payroll, Raleigh’s head was worth some Spanish gold.

Whatever the cause, when Raleigh arrived at the site of the mine, he found the Spaniards practically in possession of it. Previous to his departure, the Earls of Pembroke and Arundel had pledged their honour for his return, and Raleigh determined to vindicate their good opinion. On his arrival off the coast of Ireland, he found that the news of his disaster had preceded him: The capture of San Thomé, his failing to reach the mine, the slaughter of the Spaniards, and the dispersion of his fleet, were all exaggerated by his enemies. Gondomar passionately demanded an audience from the King, promising that all he had to say should be included in one word. And so, when admitted to the royal presence, he said: “Piratas! Piratas! Piratas!” Gondomar was well aware how such conduct was calculated to work on the timid temper of this Monarch, and abruptly left the apartment without waiting for an explanation. The Governor who had fallen at San Thomé being his near Kinsman, it is likely he was actuated by personal feelings; but it is sufficient to account for the deep animosity with which

³ Oldys’ Life (p. 468).

the Spaniards regarded Raleigh, that they knew him to have curbed their power, exposed their insidious policy, and shown himself on all occasions their most able and inveterate enemy.

The moment at which Raleigh arrived was especially inauspicious to anyone unfriendly to Philip, the mind of James being blindly bent on an alliance between his son Charles (Prince of Wales) and the Infanta. We know from him, that the English King appreciated the great abilities of Raleigh, and felt that his condemnation would be peculiarly unpopular and odious; yet he meanly determined to bring him to the scaffold, not as a victim to public justice, but as a sacrifice to the offended Majesty of Spain. ⁴

Such being Raleigh's resolution, on June 11 a proclamation was published in which James assumed a tone of high indignation towards him and his companions. He declared that he had been expressly prohibited from every hostile act against any territories of his allies; accused them of scandalous outrages in infringing the royal commission; and invited all who could give information to report to the Privy Council, that the delinquents might be brought to punishment. ⁵ James at the same time directed Villiers to address a letter to Philip, in which he declared his intention punctually to perform his promise to that Prince, by sending the offender to be dealt with in Spain, unless it would be more satisfactory to his Castilian Majesty that he should receive in England the punishment due to his crimes. In Jardine's *Criminal Trials*, ⁶ is the substance of this unpublished letter of Villiers, written by the King's direction. The original is preserved in the State Paper Office.

So, when Raleigh arrived at Plymouth and became aware of this proclamation, he moored his ship, sent his sails on shore and resolved to surrender. In the meantime, Gondomar, having obtained the royal consent to Raleigh's death, set out for Spain while James commissioned Sir Lewis Stukely (Vice-Admiral of Devon), a near Kinsman of Raleigh, to arrest him and convey him to London. After a brief delay, necessary for settling his affairs, Raleigh set out on his journey to London; but before he had proceeded twenty miles he was met by Stukely, who informed him that he had orders to arrest him and take control of his ship. Raleigh answered quietly that he had already saved him the trouble; after which they travelled in company back to Plymouth, and took up their residence at the house of Sir Christopher

⁴ (a) Rushworth's History Collections (Vol. I. p. 9); (b) Cayley, (Vol. II. p. 181).

⁵ Rymer, Fædera (Vol. XVII. p. 2).

⁶ (Vol. I. p. 483).

Harris, where they remained eight or ten days. During this interval, with what object does not clearly appear, Raleigh was left much at liberty by Stukely. He was also joined by his affectionate wife, who actively laboured for his interests; and, availing himself of these opportunities, he acquired secret information of the double dealing of the royal mind against him, and the resolution which had been taken to sacrifice him to Spain. The love of life, the hope, as he himself tells us, that he might yet be able to achieve the adventure to Guiana, and justify his conduct in the eyes of his Sovereign, effected a change in his resolution, and he determined to attempt his escape to France.

Captain King, an old officer who had sailed in the expedition, and was much attached to Raleigh, procured a bark to lie off the shore at a certain spot beyond the command of the fort; both he and Raleigh, having taken the boat at night, pulled away for the vessel, when suddenly altering his purpose, and commanding them to put about, Raleigh returned secretly to his lodging. Next day he sent money to the master of the bark requesting him to stay another evening; and yet, though both wind and tide were fair, he once more gave up the design and remained under the charge of Stukely. At this moment this artful spy of the government was joined by one Manourie (French physician), who insinuated himself into the confidence of Raleigh, yet afterwards betrayed him. Captain King stated: “Stukely took to his assistance, Manourie, a French quack; upon what occasion I here willingly omit, as well because I would not meddle with any instrument of State, as because I, little suspecting what followed, was somewhat careless in the observance of their carriage.”⁷

When we consider the circumstances in which Captain King was placed, we cannot wonder that there was in Raleigh’s mind a conflict of feelings, which kept it in painful uncertainty. Clinging to the consciousness of innocence, he at one time trusted that, if he could obtain but a short respite in London before being thrown into the Tower, he might vindicate his conduct effectually in the eyes of the King. Again, awakening to a sense of the virulence of James’s antipathy, the malice and power of his enemies, and the irresistible influence of the Spanish Court, he felt that in proceeding on his journey he was only delivering himself to inevitable destruction. The shameless manner also in which his plans had already been betrayed, and his former experience of the partiality of a jury, left him little to hope from the

⁷ Oldys’ Life (p. 521).

law; while the persuasion that he might without any disloyalty retire to an asylum in France till the violence of the King's resentment should subside, prompted him at least to lend an ear to the suggestions of Manourie, who hinted the possibility of an escape.⁸

Under these agitating and opposite feelings, Raleigh embraced a middle course, the worst which in any imminent peril can be adopted. He determined to pretend sickness, in order to move the King not to send him instantly to the Tower, and at the same time to arrange matters, that if this failed he should be able to escape before the situation became worst. With this object, having arrived at Salisbury, he complained of being slightly indisposed, and sent Captain King and Lady Raleigh forward to London along with his servants. On their departure he pretended that his malady increased, and procured some drugs from Manourie, which occasioned violent retching. Availing himself also of his chemical knowledge, he rubbed his face and body with a preparation which produced red pustules and discoloured spots, not unlike the symptoms of the plague.

Having resolved to fake a disease, Raleigh carried through his purpose with the same talent which marked everything he did. When Stukely and Manourie were sitting together, Robin (Raleigh's servant) rushed in and told them his master was out of his wits, that he had leapt out of bed in his shirt, and was scratching and biting the rushes upon the planks. On coming into the apartment after this fit was over, Stukely noticing Raleigh's skin covered with blisters, with a purple tinge round the extremities, and a spot of yellow in the middle, was instantly struck with dread. He hastened to communicate his suspicions to Bishop Andrews, by whose advice two doctors and a bachelor of physic visited Raleigh. Whilst these gentlemen were at his bedside, the dose which Raleigh had administered began to operate, and so minutely had he prepared everything, that the basins in the room, having been previously drugged, whatever was poured into them became black and earthy-coloured emitting an unpleasant odour. This complication of symptoms puzzled the doctors, then declared that the patient could not, without danger of his life, be exposed to the air, though they cautiously abstained from delivering an opinion on the exact nature of the disease. The success, however, was complete; Raleigh, being confined to his room, and attended by Manourie, who was in on the secret, gained time to write that apology for his conduct, which he addressed to the King; a

⁸ From Raleigh's Speech on the Scaffold.

discourse, considering the circumstances under which it was composed, of singular eloquence and ability.

Their plan being settled, Manourie pushed forward to London, having acted his part with no little ability, whilst the royal emissary and Raleigh followed by slower stages. On reaching the capital, Raleigh was joined by his faithful friend Captain King, who informed him that everything was ready; that Cotterel (servant of the Admiral), and Hart (seaman) were to have a boat waiting at Tilbury; that it would be best to go aboard that very evening. This, however, was declared by Raleigh to be impossible; he observed there would be no getting away without Stukely, but hoped to prevail with him to accompany him, and promised to meet Captain King the following night without fail at the Tower dock. Everything seemed now to prosper according to his wishes, and Raleigh's spirits were still farther raised by a visit, on the evening of his arrival in London, from Le Clere, a French spy who offered a bark to convey him to Calais, and letters of safe conduct to the French Governor. It was this visit which appears principally to have alarmed James, whose timid and suspicious temper converted it into a plot and treasonable correspondence with the French government. This is apparent from the manuscript papers of Sir Thomas Wilson, preserved in the State Paper Office; yet the same documents prove that Le Clere's visit was not premeditated, and related solely to that spy's wish on favouring Raleigh's escape. This friendly proposal Raleigh declined, as his own bark was already prepared. This was on a Saturday evening; and on Sunday morning, having disguised himself with a false beard, Raleigh, his Page, and Stukely, joined Captain King at the place appointed. They found the wherries waiting; Raleigh, Stukely, and the Page leapt into one, whilst Captain King, and Hart (the boatswain), occupied the other.

Since James's promise to Gondomar, that the great enemy of Spain (Raleigh) should be sacrificed, it had been the study of the King to accomplish this with some show of justice. Before Raleigh's arrival, some of his crews had deserted, and others, for misconduct, had been sent home. Many of these men were privately examined, and evidence was anxiously sought to convict Raleigh either of piracy or some other crimes worthy of death. The depositions of the Spanish merchants who had been plundered were carefully taken; but the suppression of this evidence, and the determination not to bring Raleigh to trial on any of the charges, seem to prove that government were convinced the Spaniards had been the aggressors. On this ground, it was impossible to convict Raleigh; yet the Spanish match depended on it, and Raleigh's life

must be given as a bribe to obtain the Infanta. It was the parting warning of Gondomar, that should there be any slackness, it would serve as ground for future and final discontent;⁹ the only method that remained was to induce Raleigh to attempt his escape; to engage in a correspondence with the French government, which might be construed into treason, or to commit some outrage.

When it was found that Raleigh had at first no intention of flight; that his prudence declined the assistance of the French spy, and that he stood upon the consciousness of his innocence, the persons placed about him talked of the promise made to the Spanish Ambassador of the unforgiving temper of the King, and of the power of his enemies. Orders for his stricter restraint were intimated to him; the Tower was hinted at; and the sentence of death, which still hung over Raleigh's head, was recalled to his recollection. These arts, as we have seen, prevailed; the love of life, and the hope that Raleigh might yet vindicate his character and the practicability of his project by another voyage, induced him to listen to the suggestions of his betrayers, and he became a victim to the cunning of the government, and the treachery of those who participated.

The truth of these observations is strikingly demonstrated by the proceedings which followed Raleigh's return to the Tower. A commission composed of some members of the Privy Council, amongst whom we find Abbot (Archbishop of Canterbury), Sir Francis Bacon (Lord Chancellor), and Sir Edward Coke, of whose unfavourable opinions Raleigh had already had severe experience of, was appointed to examine Raleigh. Before these dignitaries, Raleigh was accused of having fraudulently pretended that he went to discover a mine, when his real object was to recover his liberty, and commence his career as a pirate; he was charged with a design to plunge the country into a war with Spain; with having abandoned his ship's company, and expressed himself disrespectfully of the King; with having feigned madness to excite the royal compassion; and with an attempt to escape. The two last charges Raleigh admitted, justifying them by the natural desire felt by every man to preserve his life. On none of the other points could the ingenuity of his judges and the pains taken to collect evidence prove the slightest matter against him. He answered them all, and demonstrated that they were frivolous and absurd. For the mine, the sincerity of his intentions was, he said, amply proved

⁹ Birch, Bacon's Letters (p. 178).

by his taking out a company of miners, and their tools and apparatus, which cost him £2,000. As to the attack upon the Spaniards, it was accidental and against his orders. He repelled with indignation the charge of either leaving his men or exposing them to greater danger than he himself had shared; and he declared that all he had ever said touching the King was: "That he was undone by the confidence he had placed in his Majesty, and that he knew his life would be sacrificed to State purposes."

During these proceedings, the Attorney General having alluded to the royal clemency which had so long spared his life after his condemnation at Winchester, Raleigh protested that he believed the King did in his conscience clear him from all guiltiness of the fact then charged against him; and indeed he knew that his Majesty had been heard to say, in speaking of these proceedings, that he would not wish to be tried by a Middlesex jury. Raleigh also stated that Dr. Turner, his physician in the Tower, had informed him that Sir Francis Gawdy, one of the judges who sat on the trial, had declared on his deathbed, that "the justice of England had never been so degraded and injured as by the condemnation of Sir Walter Raleigh." These particulars appear in a manuscript note preserved in the State Paper Office, from which some interesting extracts have been given to the public; and it is evident that Raleigh acted during the examinations in the same spirit, acuteness, eloquence, and command of temper, which had distinguished him on his previous trial.¹⁰ The only result of this investigation was the admission of his attempt to escape. That this was only a natural impulse in the circumstances under which he was placed, all will readily admit; some may even be disposed to regard it as a necessary duty; and in a letter without date, addressed about this time to Villiers, Raleigh vindicates himself. "That which doth comfort my soul in this offence is, that even in the offence itself I had no other intent than his Majesty's service, and to make his Majesty know that my late enterprise was grounded upon a truth; and which, with one ship speedily set out, I meant to have assured, or have died; being resolved, as it is well known, to have done it from Plymouth had I not been restrained. Hereby I hoped not only to recover his Majesty's gracious opinion, but have destroyed all those malignant reports which had been spread of me. That this is true, that gentleman whom I so much trusted (my keeper), [Stukely,] and to whom I opened my heart, cannot but testify; and wherein, if I cannot be believed living, my death shall

¹⁰ Criminal Trials (Vol. I. p. 488).

witness. Yea, that gentleman cannot but avow it, that when we came back toward London I desired to save no other treasure than the exact description of those places in the Indies.¹¹ That I meant to go hence a discontented man, God, I trust, and mine own actions will dissuade his Majesty, whom neither the loss of my estate, thirteen years imprisonment, and the denial of my pardon, could beat from his service; and the opinion of being accounted a fool or rather distract, by returning as I did unpardoned, balanced with my love to his Majesty's person and estate, had no place at all in my heart. It was the last severe letter from my Lords for the speedy bringing of me up, and the impatience of dishonour, that first put me in fear of my life, or enjoying it in a perpetual imprisonment, never to recover my reputation lost, which strengthened me in my late, and too late lamented resolution if his Majesty's mercy do not abound, if his Majesty do not pity my age, and scorn to take the extremest and utmost advantage of my errors, if his Majesty in his great charity do not make a difference between offences proceeding from a life-saving natural impulsion without all ill intent, and those of an ill heart, and that your Lordship, remarkable in the world for the nobleness of your disposition, do not vouchsafe to become my intercessor. Whereby your Lordship shall bind a hundred gentlemen of my kindred to honour your memory, and bind me for all the time of that life, which your Lordship shall beg for me, to pray to God that you may ever prosper, and ever bind me to remain your most humble servant."

This letter produced no effect. The King had determined that Raleigh should die and the only question was in what manner the sacrifice should be accomplished. His Commissioners had been baffled; but it was still hoped something might be discovered to constitute the subject of a second trial, or, at least, justify the execution of the old sentence. It was suspected that Raleigh still communicated secretly with the French spy, who had already offered to assist his escape; but as his prudence was found equal to defeat any public examination, it was determined to subject him to a vigilant system of superintendence, by employing as his keeper an emissary of government, who should gain his confidence and induce him to discover enough to form ground for his condemnation.

¹¹ There is preserved in the State Paper Office, an "Inventory of such things as were found on the Body of Sir Walter Raleigh, Knight, the 15 day of August 1618." Among the different items found, were "one plot of Guiana and the River Orenoque; the description of the River Orenoque, and, a plot of Panama."

The Lieutenant of the Tower, under whose charge Raleigh had remained, was Sir Allen Apsley, the father of the celebrated Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, who has left in her *Memoirs* this amiable character of Apsley: “He was the father of all his prisoners, sweetening with such compassionate kindness their restraint that the affliction of a prison was not felt in those days; and he had also a singular kindness for all persons who were eminent in learning or in arms.” So excellent a person was not fitted for the office of a spy; and accordingly the King, with the advice of Secretary Naunton, selected Sir Thomas Wilson as Lieutenant of the Tower, whose qualifications promised more success. He was a man of learning and refinement, but of great cunning, and under the specious mask of religion and benevolence that he concealed, as his letters abundantly demonstrate, a mean and cruel disposition. Wilson was instructed to take the exclusive charge of Raleigh in the Tower, to keep him safe, to allow no persons visit him except such as were necessary for his diet and to draw from him such information, either with respect to his communication with the French Ambassador or his Guiana expedition in general, as might conduce to the object which the government had in view; namely, the speedy condemnation of the prisoner.

Before Wilson’s transfer to his new position, he was keeper of the State-papers, and there are preserved in the office over which he presided his own original minutes of the conversation and conduct of Raleigh whilst under his charge in the Tower. On the perusal of these papers, it is difficult to say whether the preponderating feeling is sympathy for the captive, or disgust and indignation for his unfeeling and treacherous keeper. “Wilson entered upon his charge on September 11, and from that time until October 15, when he was withdrawn from the Tower, his minute and daily reports to Secretary Naunton show a system of rigid observation and of artful ensnaring espionage on his part, which was never for a moment relaxed. Raleigh’s own servant was immediately dismissed, and a man appointed by Wilson took his place. Lady Raleigh and her son were excluded from the Tower; but she was allowed, and even invited to correspond freely with her husband; and then the notes which she sent, as well as Raleigh’s answers, were intercepted, and sent to the King and Council for their perusal before they were delivered. Wilson himself never stirred from his prisoner from the time he opened his lodging in the morning, till with his own hand he locked him up for the night. At his meals, at his devotions, and during the attendance of his physician and surgeon, this persevering keeper never quitted his [Raleigh’s] apartment. His feeling towards his

unhappy prisoner, and his zeal in the unworthy task in which he was employed, are manifested by the language which he constantly uses respecting him in his reports and letters; he calls him 'hypocrite and arch impostor,' with other terms of reproach. 'The King of Heaven,' says he in one of his letters, 'preserve your Majesty from having many such dangerous subjects.'¹²

Wilson, having lodged his prisoner in apartments of greater security than those in which he had been placed by Apsley, he writes to Secretary Naunton: "I have removed this man into a safer and higher lodging, which though it seemeth nearer heaven, yet there is there no means to escape but into hell." Again, in a letter to the King, Wilson writes: "I hope, by such means as I shall use, to work out more than I have yet done: If not, I know no other means but a rack or a halter." It is mortifying to observe the degrading discoveries which these papers make of the feelings and disposition of James, who acted as principal inquisitor over Raleigh; he personally directed the strictest seclusion and superintendence, suggested the mode of examination, inspected the intercepted letters, and exhibited much disappointment that his own ingenuity and that of his assistants should be in the end entirely baffled.

At the time when Wilson was appointed to take the place of Apsley and to wait upon Raleigh, the latter was completely broken in health. He had been afflicted during the whole period of his imprisonment by an intermitting fever and ague; his body was covered with painful blisters; his left side so swollen as to occasion perpetual uneasiness; and he was still lame from the wound received in the Cadiz expedition. Wilson was first introduced to him by Apsley as he lay in bed; and Raleigh, after bidding him welcome and hearing that he was appointed to take charge of him, exclaimed, "let the King do with me what he will; for never man was more desirous to die!" This speech and other particulars were reported to Naunton, and the following note, written by that Minister in reply, demonstrates the manner in which the communication was received. "I read most of both your letters to his Majesty, who allows well of your care and discretion. I hope you will every day get ground of that hypocrite that is so desirous to die, mortified man that he is. His Majesty was well pleased with your past services; he will think long for the ripening and mellowing of the observations and conferences by which you are to work upon that cripple. The best comfort I can give is that I hope you shall not long be troubled with him. Therefore do quickly what you have to do; seize opportunity by

¹² Jardine, *Criminal Trials* (p. 489).

the forehead, and press as much as you can: I know you both can and will.”¹³ If anything wanted to prove the King’s animosity against Raleigh, this letter would amply supply the evidence, whilst it exposes at the same time the unworthiness of the artifices and instruments employed by the royal inquisitor.

There is preserved in the State Paper Office an original document of Wilson’s, entitled: “A Relation of what hath passed and been observed by me since my coming to Sir Walter Raleigh, upon Friday the 11th of September,” which throws a clear light on the conferences between this spy and the prisoner. After alluding to the disease and debility under which he found Raleigh suffering, Wilson describes the manner in which he proceeded to fulfill his instructions. Having introduced himself, he goes on to write: “As sent by the King out of his Majesty’s gracious and Princely goodness, because he knew him to be a man more honest than cunning.” Wilson urged Raleigh to disclose whatever he knew that might be of importance to the public service, in which case there was no doubt he would experience the royal clemency. To this Raleigh answered with the greatest earnestness, that if he were aware of any such thing, he would, sick as he was, write it that very night to the King, an asseveration which had little effect, for his keeper proceeded to charge him with a treasonable correspondence with France. With much cunning Wilson attempted to persuade Raleigh that it would be as well to reveal what had been already confessed by others: His conference with the French spy on coming home, and his interview with the Ambassador of the same nation before setting out, were, he hinted, already well known. Wilson also pressed Raleigh to acknowledge his real purpose in escaping to France; what promises were made to him; what employment he was to receive there, and what plots and designs were depended on.

The craft and duplicity of Wilson is strongly depicted in this sentence of his journal, sent to Secretary Naunton: “Thus far I went with him; but yesternight, having before let out some pieces of these things, that he might think it came hardly from me as from myself, he made me a long answer, and told me in gross what he had done before in retail: Saying, whatsoever is confessed by others, sure I am, there is nothing can touch my fidelity to the King nor my country.” Raleigh confessed, that the only conference he had with the French spy was merely compliment, with whom he had no intimate acquaintance. With regard to the French

¹³ Criminal Trials (p. 492).

Ambassador, it was true, that before his voyage he had come to see his ship; but it was a visit, he said, simply out of curiosity, and he was influenced by the same motives which had brought him on the same errand the Ambassadors of Venice and Savoy had done, and even some of the Spaniards. His own purpose, he affirmed, in escaping to France, was solely to shelter himself from danger until the storm blew over, and he might have an opportunity, either through the influence of the Queen Anne, or of his other friends, to recover favour. As to promises made him, he protested he had none; but for employment he had hoped he might be able to do some service against the Spaniard, seeing he was acquainted as well with the nature of his resources as with the weak points upon which he might be attacked. With regard to messages, letters, or plots, Raleigh's only plot, he declared, was to save his life by an escape somewhere, being alarmed by the letters which he had received from Lords and friends, which informed him the King was determined to have strict justice inflicted on his person; and, having once determined to escape, he knew no fitter place than France. Such were Raleigh's answers; and although nothing could be more clear, Wilson was by no means satisfied with them.

The great matter of suspicion, upon which the King's spy never ceased to interrogate Raleigh, was his interview with the French spy; but upon this point his prisoner invariably adhered to the same account, which he confirmed on the scaffold, that the object of Le Clere's visit was simply to facilitate his escape to France; that he had no correspondence with that government, treasonable or otherwise; that he had no commission whatever from the French King; a point upon which immediate proof might be procured, as such commissions were all upon record, and might be seen for a French crown; and that his real intention in the voyage to Guiana was the working of a gold mine, which was situated near the town, as could be proved by the most satisfactory evidence. Disappointed in his main object, Wilson appears to have been driven to the system of exaggerating trifles, and inventing contradictions and incongruities in Raleigh's discourse, of which he sent a daily report to the King and Secretary Naunton. Unimportant and often ridiculous as these memorials are, they contain some interesting particulars of the last days of Raleigh.

On September 12, Wilson's Journal contains this remarkable passage: "This evening, finding him [Raleigh] at my coming in reading the Psalms, I told him that there he had the best comfort; that there he had a man and a King, and the best man and the best King that ever was, who had as great affliction as ever any had; and yet by his constancy and faithfulness he

overcame all; and so might he. Hereupon he began and told me from the beginning to the end all his misfortunes; how first, at his Majesty's coming in, Northampton, Suffolk, Salisbury, and the rest, plotted to get him and Cobham out of favour, and to get everything into their own hands; then he went to the arraignment at Winchester, and said it was as unjust a condemnation without proof and testimony as ever was known. So went he along his thirteen years' imprisonment, and the means he took to procure liberty for his voyage; his disasters there, and all the tedious circumstances; and then the betraying of him by Sir Lewis Stukely on his return. After this I told him, if he would but disclose what he knew, the King would forgive him, and do him all favour. 'Aye,' quoth he, 'how should I be assured of that? The King will say, when it is told, the craven was afraid of his life, else he would not have told it.'"

Another entry of interest is dated September 13: "This day, upon his complaint of his misery, I gave him counsel and comfort to bear his affliction with patience, upon the assurance of God's mercy, and the example of such as God had suffered to be as grievously afflicted as flesh and blood could bear, and yet had restored them to as great felicity as ever. He took occasion thereupon to commend the magnanimity of the Romans, who would rather have their deaths by their own hands, than endure any that was base or reproachful. To which I answered that they were such as knew not God, nor the danger of their souls to be damned to perpetual torment for destroying their bodies, which God had made a temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell. To which he said it was a disputable question; for divers did hold opinion that a man may do it, and yet not desperately despair of God's mercy, but die in God's favour. Where to this discourse of his tended it is easily seen; but I think he hath no such Roman courage. Mr. Lieutenant tells me he hath had like discourse with him heretofore, who charged him with such intent upon occasion of having so many apothecary's drugs, and such like, which it were well saith he, were not suffered to be there."

Soon after these alleged suicidal tendencies, Raleigh had earnestly requested permission to write to the King. Wilson, at the same time, made this request known at Court, suggested that his own wife Lady Wilson should lodge in the Tower to watch his prisoner at any moment when he himself was absent. But King James's resolution to sacrifice Raleigh underwent no change. He had already written to the Spanish Court, expressing his willingness, either that the prisoner should be executed in his own country, or, if it was more agreeable to the Majesty of Castile, be sent to suffer death in Spain. On October 15, the orders, for so they

may be called, of Philip were received in England. They were couched in the form of a dispatch, addressed to Don Sanchez de Ulloa (Spanish spy), dated at San Lorenzo, October 5, and signed by King Philip. It states briefly: "Having received King James's letter through Gondomar, he did not delay to intimate, that it would be more agreeable to him that the punishment of Raleigh should take place in England; and as the offence was notorious, that its chastisement should be exemplary and immediate." This last injunction appears to have been strictly fulfilled.

Wilson was hastily recalled from the Tower, and commanded once more to deliver his prisoner into the charge of Apsley. Raleigh received this as intimation that his immediate execution was soon, and expressed no regret. King James, having delivered his final orders to the judges, and signed the warrant for execution, he commanded Raleigh to be informed that it was his pleasure he should prepare for death. This was October 24, and though Raleigh lay sick with fever, he was raised from bed at eight in the morning, and taken to the King's Bench at Westminster. Being placed at the Bar, Yelverton (Attorney-General) observed that the prisoner fifteen years ago had been found guilty of high treason, since which time his Majesty had mercifully abstained from the infliction of punishment; but it was now his royal pleasure that the former judgment should be carried into effect. The record of conviction was then read; and Raleigh being asked the usual question, what he could say why execution should not pass against him, requested indulgence, since his voice was weak from his fever.

Raleigh was executed in the old palace yard of Winchester the morning of October 29, 1618, by the Sheriffs of London on the "proofs of guilt." The axe descended, and at two strokes the head was severed from the body, which never shrunk or altered its position. Raleigh was in his sixty-sixth year. The head, after being as usual held up to the view of the people on either side of the scaffold, was put into a red bag, over which his velvet nightgown was thrown, and the whole immediately carried to a mourning-coach which was waiting, and conveyed to Lady Raleigh. This faithful and affectionate woman, who never married again, though she survived her husband twenty-nine years, had the head embalmed and preserved in a case, which she kept till her death. Raleigh's body was buried privately near the high altar of St Margaret's Church, in Westminster, close beside the spot where Harrington, the author of

Oceana, was afterwards interred.¹⁴ No stone or memorial marks the place, a circumstance to be ascribed to the destitution in which Lady Raleigh and her son were left, or the fear they felt of drawing down further indignation of the Monarch. Raleigh's head, after the death of his widow, was preserved by his son, and was buried with it at his seat of West Horsley, in Surrey.

Raleigh's sentence of death was fifteen years old and had been annulled by full pardon under the Great Seal of England. The only other evidence brought against him was the report that Count Gundamor denounced him to King James as a pirate. The machinations of this Spanish Ambassador availed more with James against this illustrious Knight than his own conspicuous merit and the love and admiration of his fellow-subjects. These details were gathered from a number of letters found in old English publications, some of which accompany the official records of the trial.

Raleigh was the last survivor of the favourites of Elizabeth and of the distinguished English Officers who defeated the Spanish in 1588. There is retribution in history. Today, the descendants of the colonists who settled in Virginia, are foremost among those who have swept the power of Spain from the Western Hemisphere. Men of the blood of Raleigh's race have driven the flag of Castile and Arragon from the West Indies, the islands of the Pacific Ocean, and eliminated the ancient prestige of Spain from the history of the future. The royal line of Stuart is extinct. The name of Raleigh lives and is honoured throughout the civilized world. The fact that Raleigh spent £40,000 of his private funds on the expedition which resulted in the discovery of Virginia is not generally known. Under the terms of the royal patent granted him, the new country was to belong to him and to his heirs forever. One-fifth of the treasure discovered was to revert to the crown of England. Elizabeth, and not Raleigh, as is commonly believed, named the land Virginia, hence her title "The Virgin Queen."

The curious and interesting little volume, published by Lord Hailes, entitled: *The Secret Correspondence of Sir Robert Cecil with James VI of Scotland*, establishes the point of Cecil's enmity to Raleigh on perfectly satisfactory evidence. Referring generally to the correspondence, I may quote a few passages in support of this. In the third letter from Lord Henry Howard to Edward Bruce (James's spy in the management of the correspondence with Cecil), there are these interesting passages: "You must persuade the King, in his next dispatch,

¹⁴ Raleigh's Works (Vol. VIII. p. 744).

to direct you to thank Cecil, in the letter which you write to me, for the light he receives of Cobham and Raleigh, by this advertisement, and if it please his Majesty to speak of them suitably to the concert which Cecil holds, it will be better; for Cecil swore to me this day, that Duo Erinacii, that is, he and they would never live under one apple-tree. You must remember also that I gave you notice of the diabolical triplicity, that is, Cobham, Raleigh, and Northumberland, that met every day at Durham House, where Raleigh lies, in consultation, which awaked all the best wits of the town, out of suspicions of sundry kinds, to watch what chickens they would hatch out of these cockatrice-eggs, that were daily and nightly sitten on.” On page 88, Howard describes Cobham and Raleigh as those who hover in the air for an advantage as “kites [hawks] do for carrion;” and on page 126, there is a sentence, in which, by the direction of Cecil (for Howard represents himself as nothing more than his spy in managing this correspondence), the King is instructed to look upon Raleigh as the person who would willingly give the stab to James’s hope of succession. Of this procedure it is probable that Raleigh was not then aware, and it affords a mortifying picture of the duplicity and hollowness of Cecil’s character also. As late as September 6, 1600, we have, in the Sidney *Letters* this curious passage, proving that Cecil’s son was brought up at Sherborne under the care of Raleigh, and that the Secretary, when he could steal a moment from his public duties, made a party with Lord Cobham to take a journey there and enjoy himself at Raleigh’s countryseat. “Mr. Secretary hath picked out this time to be away, and to take some pleasure abroad, from the infinite pains and care he takes in the dispatch of her Majesty’s service when he is at Court. It is said he is gone with my Lord Cobham to see Sir Walter Raleigh at Sherborne, where young Mr. Cecil, his son, is brought up.”¹⁵ It can be proved from a minute circumstance, of no value otherwise than as affording a link in the evidence which settles this question, that, at the very time Cecil was secretly representing Raleigh in the worst light to James, he was living with Raleigh on terms of the kindest intimacy.

Early in the year 1602, Mr Boyle (Earl of Cork), came over to England with the intention to purchase Raleigh’s large Irish estate. He brought with him letters of introduction from Sir George Carew to the chief men about Court; and one of these was a letter to Cecil, requesting this Minister to introduce Boyle to Raleigh, and to recommend him as a proper

¹⁵ (Vol. II. pp. 210, 212, 214).

purchaser of his lands. Cecil did so accordingly, and managed the sale for Raleigh.¹⁶ This was early in the year 1602, probably in May or June, and let the reader remark in what terms, at this same time, Howard, who was Cecil's spy, writing under the instructions of his master, speaks of Raleigh and Cobham, the latter being Cecil's brother-in-law, and Raleigh the friend to whom he had entrusted the charge of his son: "Your Lordship may believe that hell did never spew up such a couple (Raleigh and Cobham) when it cast up Cerberus and Phlegethon. They are now set on the pin of making tragedies, by meddling with your affairs. For my Lord Admiral, the other day, wished from his soul he had but the same commission to carry the cannon to Durham House (Raleigh's residence) that he had this time twelvemonths to carry it to Essex House, to prove what sport he could make in that fellowship."¹⁷

In addition to the observations made, in consequence of some further researches, to throw a clear light upon this alleged conspiracy, which has, by all former historians and biographers been pronounced so obscure as to be perfectly inexplicable, "the conspiracy," writes Cayley, "to which I allude is a riddle of State which has never been solved, and the speculations that have been formed on it would fill a moderate volume. Our own writers afford us little satisfaction on the subject, and the account given of it by Thuanus is founded on the gross misrepresentations of his countryman, Victor Cayet, and is truly unworthy a place in his history."¹⁸ And the historian, Hume writes: "Everything remains still mysterious in this conspiracy, and history can give us no clue to unravel it."

This light of this plot is chiefly derived from a very remarkable letter published in the Oxford edition of the *Works of Raleigh*, to which no attention has been paid, and upon which no observations have been made by its anonymous editor. The circumstance is by no means extraordinary, as the letter is without date, without signature, and without address; written in a dark enigmatical style, with initials sometimes used instead of names, and altogether so obscure, that unless studied with reference to a particular line of research, and with a minute attention to the state of the parties and intrigues of the Court of Elizabeth (immediately previous to the death of the Queen and the accession of James), it is quite impossible to make anything out of it. The editor states that it is taken from Burleigh's papers, and was probably

¹⁶ (a) Oldys' Life (p. 358); (b) Cayley, (Vol. I. p. 320).

¹⁷ Cecil's Secret Correspondence (pp. 132, 133).

¹⁸ (Vol. II. p. 5).

written by Lord Henry Howard to Cecil. The conjecture was superfluous, for the letter itself contains distinct internal evidence that this was the case, the writer styling the Duke of Norfolk, who was executed by Elizabeth for his intrigues with Queen Mary, “his brother,” a designation which could come from no one but Lord Henry Howard; for the Earl of Surrey left only two sons, the Duke of Norfolk and Lord Henry Howard. That it was addressed to Cecil is not absolutely certain, but nearly so, if we consider the deep confidential intimacy which subsisted between Howard and that Statesman. The circumstance that the letter was found amongst the Burleigh papers, and the fact, completely established by other evidence, that Howard and Cecil were the chief instruments in the downfall of Raleigh and Cobham, being the two great supporters of James’s government at the period of his accession, is undeniable. Of these statesmen, Wilson says: “This man (Secretary Cecil) the King found Secretary and Master of the Wards, and to these he added the Treasurer’s Staff, knowing him to be the stiff of his treasury. The Earl of Northampton he made Lord Privy Seal; and these were the two prime wheels of his [King James’s] triumphant chariot. The Earl of Suffolk was made Lord Chamberlain before; but he came far behind in the management of the King’s affairs, being a spirit of a grosser temper. Upon the shoulders of the two first the King laid the burthen of his business.”¹⁹ We know from Raleigh himself that the three men who set themselves against him, and to whom he traced his ruin, were Northampton (Lord Henry Howard), Robert Cecil, and Suffolk. The letter could only, from its confidential nature, be written either to Cecil or Suffolk; but whether to the one or to the other is not very material, inasmuch as a confidential communication, addressed to one member of a plot, may be looked on without injustice as addressed to all. In one part of the letter, Howard advises the person to whom he addresses himself, to “hold back correspondences with neighbour States.” Could this have been done by anyone but Cecil, who was the Secretary of State, and managed these correspondences? I doubt not. With regard to the date of the letter, from a passage which occurs in it relative to the correspondence of Cobham and Raleigh with Scotland, it most probably was written in May 1602. It is not to be concealed that Howard, in the letter, speaks of “the Secretary” in the third person; but this was probably a screen.

¹⁹ See Kennet, (Vol. II. p. 80).

Keeping these circumstances in mind, let us come to the letter, which, as it is very long, I regret cannot give its entirety. The reader will find it in Volume VIII of the Oxford edition of Raleigh's Works (page 750).

As already stated, the letter is without date, but it must have been written shortly before the death of Queen Elizabeth. However, this is a minor matter in comparison with the singular fact: That the letter contains an exact outline of the plan, that was afterwards put in execution for the destruction of Cobham and Raleigh, by entrapping them in a charge of treason. We have in the first place this sentence: "The way that Cobham hath elected to endear himself is by peace with Spain; which hath so many difficulties as will rather confound his dizziness than reward his industry. But as my Lord of Leicester dealt with my brother, finding his humour apt to deal with Scotland, when he thrust him into a treaty about those affairs, assuring himself that he should either lose the Q [Queen] for the present, or the other Q for the future, so must you embark this gallant Cobham, by your wit or interest, in some course of the Spanish way, as may either reveal his weakness or snare his ambition."

The practice of Leicester with the Duke of Norfolk (Henry Howard's brother), and the subsequent ruin of that noble person, are matters of familiar history; and we see that Howard here recommends Cecil in like manner to manipulate Cobham into some intrigue with Spain, by which his ambition might be endangered, and not only his ruin but that of his friend Raleigh. It is clear, that throughout the letter, although Cobham is frequently spoken of in the singular number as the person to be worked upon, yet it is always, that it may bring about their ruin; that is, as the letter most fully shows, the ruin of him and Raleigh.

The reader need not be told how completely this sentence sketches out the very plan which was adopted. Cobham was induced to engage in an intrigue with Spain; in that intrigue his enemies attempted to involve Raleigh, and they accomplished the ruin of both. But this is only the plot in its infancy, or most general form. The particular mode in which such a project may be executed is next pointed out in the letter by Howard. "Be not unwilling to engage him [Cobham] in traffic with suspected Ministers, and upon the first occasion of false treaty to make him the Minister." How completely this was followed may be seen in the trial documents. Cobham did engage in a secret correspondence with Aremberg (Minister of the Archduke), who was in the interest of Spain, and so much suspected, that Coke at the trial did not scruple to affirm he had evidence enough to convict this foreign Ambassador of treason;

and it was out of this secret correspondence that his enemies spun the net which ultimately caught both Cobham and Raleigh.²⁰ After this, Howard proceeds in his lengthy and obscure style to give many advices, and recommends extreme measures to be pursued against Cobham and Raleigh: “Follow them not; the best course was in all respects to be rid of them. It is better to crush their edges than to neglect jeopardy. This means to cut them off must be either occasional or violent. In all occasions, both public and private, it was good to gain the start and cut down the thorn before the time come wherein it can make account to take hold of you.” This advice was scrupulously pursued. There follows a very singular passage, too long to be extracted, in which Howard draws a parallel between Cobham and Raleigh. It is clever and amusing; but the important fact to be derived from it is that Raleigh, in his political opinions, with regard to peace with Spain, and other public measures, was directly opposed to Cobham; a circumstance resting on most unsuspected evidence, since it comes from his bitter enemy, and wholly subversive of the theory attempted to be made out in his trial, that he and Cobham were embarked in the same treasonable intercourse with Spain. So far, all is clear and certain, and no one who reads these passages, and compares them with the course afterwards pursued by Howard and Cecil, will hesitate to confess, that the plan here recommended was that what afterwards followed. Some of our historians have expressed their astonishment that the conspiracy, which they have hastily and ignorantly denominated “Raleigh’s Plot” should have broken out so suddenly after the King’s accession. They wondered that it should have been so rapidly concocted, and so speedily brought to light, almost before the Monarch was seated on his English throne. The letter which I have just quoted from. explains the mystery.

The conspiracy was an invention of Howard’s, sketched out during the lifetime of Elizabeth, and for which the materials were prepared before the accession of James. The train was laid; it needed only the match to inflame it. On similar lines were contrived the Gunpowder Plot. But a little research will enable us to proceed from this general outline of their future operations, given by Howard, to the particular mode in which Cobham was first involved, and Raleigh afterwards drawn in.

Cecil had married Elizabeth Brooke, a sister of Cobham’s; and there was in the family another brother, George Brooke, an ambitious, unprincipled man, talented, with great passion

²⁰ Jardine’s Trials (p. 396).

for political intrigue. This George Brooke had become engaged in the conspiracy of the Catholic priests (Watson and Clarke), for the seizure of the King's person, which was denominated the Bye Plot. "What could be Brooke's motive for joining the conspiracy," says Jardine "it is difficult to ascertain, though it would appear from the statements of some of his confederates, as well as his own, that he was actuated neither by religious nor political considerations, but merely by a sordid view to his own aggrandizement."²¹ It appears extremely probable that Cecil, aware of the intrigues of the Catholic priests, and the conspiracy which they were hatching, engaged Brooke (his brother-in-law) to become a party to their plans, that he might discover and betray their secrets. This can only be stated as a conjecture; but there are two circumstances upon which a presumption of its truth may be founded. The first of these is Brooke's declaration on the scaffold as given by an eyewitness, Sir Dudley Carleton: "He [Brooke] did somewhat extenuate his offences, both in the treasons and in the course of his life, naming these (the treasons) rather errors than capital crimes, and his former faults sins, but not so heinous as they were traduced, which he referred to the God of truth and time to discover, and so left it as if somewhat yet lay hid, which would one day appear for his justification." One would ask, is this not very like the language of one who felt he had been unfairly dealt with, and who wished to avoid the disgraceful acknowledgment that he had submitted to be employed as a spy and a base informer, yet repelled the idea that he was a traitor, and left his justification to the God of truth and to time? But this is not all. We have the following remarkable letter, or rather fragment of a letter, from Brooke to Cecil, which proves a very intimate interchange of services on the part of Cecil's brother-in-law, and promises of rewards from Cecil; the allusion (first sentence) is to Cecil's deceased wife, Brooke's sister:

Letter by George Brooke to Robert Cecil

November 18, 1603²²

She that loved me, and whose memory you yet love, beholds from heaven the extreme calamity of her father's house. Shall I need say anymore after this? 'Tis all but weak if I pray

²¹ Criminal Trials (p. 390).

²² The original is in the State Paper Office, from which it was published by Thomson in her Appendix to The Life of Raleigh.

you to cancel injuries past; you have promised to do so, and I believe if I promise you anything of myself, you may truly say you need it not nor care for it. Therefore I must stand only upon your free disposition, and shall be so much the more assured, because nothing binds you. Leave now, I beseech your Lordship, to be nice, and stick not to dissever yourself in my relief. But above all give me leave to conjure your Lordship to deal directly with me that I am to expect after so many promises received, and so much conformity and accepted service performed on my part to you.

Your Lordship's brother-in-law to command.

G. Brooke

This letter is dated November 18, 1603, the day after Raleigh's trial, and four days before that of Brooke's brother, Cobham. The letter proves that Brooke had received many promises of reward from Cecil, many directions with regard to what Cecil wished him to do, that he had conformed his proceeding to these injunctions, that his services had been accepted and acknowledged by Cecil, and that, after all, the promises made to him had not been kept; so that he found himself indirectly dealt with, and knew not what he was to expect. Does not this letter raise our presumptions into something very nearly amounting to proof, and make it almost certain that Brooke, whose motives for entering into the conspiracy are proved to have been neither of a religious nor political nature, but that he was solely employed by Cecil as a spy on his brother's conspirators?

In all events, one fact is certain from the letter just given, that after the conspiracy was discovered, Cecil had employed Brooke in matters of a very secret and confidential nature, and having performed the services required of him, Brooke expected from Cecil some fulfillment of those promises. The most logical question that next occurs, is what were these services, and this will lead us on to the development of the plot against Cobham and Raleigh.

Having discovered the treason of the priests, and found either that Brooke was really an accomplice in it, or that he had involved himself so far that he might be treated as an accomplice, the next object of Howard and Cecil was to prevail upon him to implicate his brother and Raleigh by declaring that he was privy to the treason. How completely this was accomplished, appears by an extract from Brooke's examination: "Being asked what was meant by this jargon, the Bye and the Main, he said that the Lord Cobham told him that Grey

and others were but upon the Bye, but he and Raleigh were upon the Main. Being asked what exposition his brother made of these words, he saith he is loath to repeat it; and after saith, by the Main was meant the taking away of the King and his issue, and thinks on his conscience it was infused into his brother's head by Raleigh.”²³

There is a letter in the State Paper Office from Sir William Waad to Robert Cecil, dated August 3, 1603, in which Cecil's anxiety to connect Brooke, Cobham, and Raleigh, in the same treason, is very apparent. Waad sends him information regarding the examination of the parties in the priests' treason, and writes: “My Lord Grey is now confest Sir Walter Rawley [Raleigh] was ordinarily thrice a-week with the Lord Cobham; what their conferences were none but themselves do know. But Mr. Brooke confidently thinketh what his brother knows was known to the other.” This means that Brooke is pretty certain that his brother had imparted the priests' treason to Raleigh. So far, then, all had succeeded. Brooke had been induced to accuse his brother of being acquainted with the conspiracy to generate the surprise of the King, and Cobham, who had been intriguing with Aremberg, and engaging “in a traffic with suspected Ministers,” found himself involved in a charge of treason which might bring his head into jeopardy. Howard and Cecil had complete power over him; and their next step was to get Cobham to accuse and implicate Raleigh. Here, however, they experienced more difficulty, from the weak, false, and vacillating character of the one, and the talent and uprightness of the other. Brooke, we see, had informed Cecil (through Waad), that he confidently thought Raleigh knew all that Cobham knew, but this was no evidence. It became necessary to extract proofs of Raleigh's guilt from Cobham's own lips. Taking into account Cobham's various examinations, declarations, and letters addressed to the Council, he appears, previous to his last declaration on the scaffold, to have “disburdened his breast of its secret knowledge no less than nine times.” On all occasions, Cecil and Howard, with the assistance of Coke, were the principal persons before whom the examinations were conducted; it appears of the greatest consequence in the development of this plot to attend to the various and contradictory accounts of Cobham. In doing so, I entreat the reader to keep in mind the fact, that the hopes of Cecil and Howard, in their plan for fixing treason upon Raleigh, rested principally if not solely on the evidence to be extracted from Cobham.

²³ Jardine's Trials (p. 429).

Cobham was examined first on July 16, again on July 19, and once more on July 20. The examinations of July 16 and July 19 are preserved in the State Paper Office, and in both of them, Cobham denies all knowledge of plots or treasonable designs of any kind. Of course he then entirely supported Raleigh. On the examination of July 20, being shown the letter from Raleigh to Cecil, and informing him of the suspicions Raleigh entertained of Cobham's intrigues with Count Aremberg, Cobham bursts out into vehement exclamations against Raleigh, and then makes a statement, the substance of which is very imperfectly given in the reports of the trial.²⁴ This examination of July 20, although it is stated to have been read at the trial, is not to be found in the State Paper Office; but there is no doubt that it completely implicated Raleigh, "accusing him of treasonable plots and invasions." From a letter of Cecil's, dated August 4, addressed to Sir Thomas Parry, and first printed by Cayley, we are enabled to add the material fact, that although Cobham had on July 20 accused Raleigh, "before eleven Councilors, to be privy to his Spanish course, yet being newly examined (this is his fourth examination) [July 29] he seemeth not to clear Sir Walter in most things, and to take all the burden to himself." Cecil goes on to observe in the same letter, that, "notwithstanding this retractation, there will probably be more proof got against Raleigh, as, since their being in the Tower, intelligence hath passed from one to another, in which Raleigh expostulated his unkind using of him."²⁵ Cobham was again examined on August 13 before Howard, and his declarations, which are not quoted fully in the trial proceedings, appear to have been exculpatory of Raleigh. Cobham refused to say anything, although pressed on the point, which should connect him with the treasonable speech about cutting off the King and his cubs. This was his fifth examination. On October 13 he was examined for the sixth time, without anything conclusive as to Raleigh's guilt being extracted from him, and it was probably not long after this, certainly in the same month, that Cobham, worked upon by some means or other, once more changed his opinion, and addressed the following letter to Cecil, Nottingham, and Suffolk (Lord Chamberlain): "So low is my poor estate at this present, that no requital for your favours can I promise; but while I breathe will pray for God ever to assist you and keep you from all affliction, which my soul in the highest degree is moved of. Out of charity this I humbly pray of your Lordships, that I might speak with you all three; you shall be a means

²⁴ Criminal Trials (pp. 410, 411).

²⁵ Cayley, (Vol. II. p. 11).

thereby to send me in peace to the grave. The bottom of my heart I will disclose unto you, which to no living creature but to yourselves I will do. God send you all as great comfort as my affliction is great; and so to God's protection do I wish you." This letter invited another interview with Cecil, and his confederates Suffolk and Nottingham; but what immediate steps they adopted does not appear.

In the meantime, Raleigh writes a letter on October 31 to Cobham; the latter responds on November 1, clearing himself of all the things of which he had accused Raleigh of. The enemies of Raleigh, however, were not to be so easily defeated. They procured Cobham's wife (Lady Kildare), who was a Howard and daughter of Nottingham, the High-Admiral, to write to her husband that there was no way to save his life but to accuse Raleigh. So Cobham once more writes to the Lords of the Council on November 16, the day before Raleigh's trial, in which he again departed from his former examinations, and incriminated his friend. Before proceeding farther, let us for a moment rapidly run over these various examinations and letters of Cobham, in order to ascertain how much weight is to be attached to the evidence of such a person. In his first examination he exculpates Raleigh; in his second he adheres to his first; in his third he is inveighed by a device into an accusation of Raleigh; in his fourth he again exculpates Raleigh of any treasonable designs; in his fifth he adheres to this; in his sixth he follows the same course; in his letter to Raleigh on November 1, he again, in the most solemn manner, exculpates Raleigh of all guilt; and once more, on November 16, he is prevailed on to alter his story, and to accuse Raleigh. We have here eight examinations from Cobham and out of these, six are in favour of Raleigh, whilst two, including the last on November 16, were against Raleigh. It is evident, that Cobham swayed with the wind that Cecil blew, for with Cobham's last letter of November 16, accusing Raleigh, not a moment was lost: Raleigh was tried, and, on the evidence of this letter, he was found guilty on November 17. This evidence, however, was of such a kind as could not possibly be satisfactory, for a contemporary and eye witness of the trial characterizes it: "The main evidence was Cobham's accusation, which, all things considered, was no more to be weighed than the barking of a dog. I would not for much have been of the jury to have found him [Raleigh] guilty."²⁶ And indeed, setting aside the fact that the witness (Cobham) had six successive times contradicted his previous statements, the

²⁶ Jardine's Trials (p. 463): Letter in Sir T. Matthews' Collection.

accusation in the letter itself did not amount to treason. Accordingly, the object of Raleigh's enemies was to procure a still stronger declaration from Cobham, and this they extracted from him on November 22, the very day of his own trial. "There is an examination of Lord Cobham, taken before several Lords of the Council on November 22, 1603, in which he fully and circumstantially repeats his former accusation of Raleigh, adding several circumstances which he had not mentioned before. This examination is signed by Cobham."²⁷ But once more, Cobham changed his story. Although he incriminated Raleigh in one part of his defense, he appears to have completely contradicted his former letter of accusation that he wrote on November 22. Of this we have the best possible evidence in Cecil's letter to Sir Thomas Parry, dated December 1, where there is this passage: "The Friday after, the Lord Cobham was arraigned before thirty-one of the Peers, the Lord Chancellor sitting as High Steward. He denied then that Raleigh was privy to his purpose to go into Spain, and for the matter of money to be gotten for discontented persons, he confessed that it was a conceit of his own thoughts, never communicated to any, but died in him as soon as it was harboured in his mind; though he did reveal it to the Lords of the Council when they examined him about other matters. Concerning the setting up of the Lady Arabella, he fastened it upon his brother, George Brooke; and for Raleigh, though he confessed that in many things he had done him wrong, yet he maintained still the pension sought for by him, and withal that Raleigh moved to solicit Aremberg to persuade the King of Spain to send an army into Milford Haven."²⁸

So, for the tenth time, Cobham at his trial appears to have varied in his general story; to have rather exculpated Raleigh than corroborated his former accusations; and to have added a new circumstance against him to which no one was likely to affix any credit. Such being the state of things, Cobham was found guilty, by his brother's confession (George Brooke) being the chief evidence against him. His conduct and behaviour on the trial are minutely described by Sir Dudley Carleton, and the reader's attention is particularly requested to the passage, as it will be afterwards shown to be of importance. "Cobham led the way on Friday, and made such a fasting-day's piece of work of it, that he discredited the place to which he was called. Never was seen so poor and abject a spirit. He heard his indictment with much fear and trembling. After sentence of condemnation given, he begged a great while for life and favour, alleging his

²⁷ *Ibid.*, (p. 445): Letter in Sir T. Matthews' Collection.

²⁸ Cayley, (Vol. II. p. 63).

confession as a meritorious act.” Another observation of Carleton’s in the same letter is material to be noticed. “We cannot yet judge what will become of him (Cobham) or the rest; for all are not like to go one way. Cobham is of the surest side; for he is thought least dangerous, and the Lord Cecil undertakes to be his friend.”

We have now analyzed the confessions and character of Cobham with perhaps a tedious minuteness. It is to be recollected, however, that he constitutes the single witness against Raleigh, and the object is completely to develop the plot to which Raleigh was made a sacrifice, and which has been considered, from its obscurity, so inexplicable. The reader will now be able to appreciate the mixture of fear, weakness, and falsehood, which composed the character of Cobham during his trial.

Keeping all this in view, I shall next follow Raleigh to the scaffold. Raleigh had been condemned on November 22 and was brought out for execution on December 10. Eyewitness to this account is from Carleton again: “The Lord Cobham, who was now to play his part, and by his former actions promised nothing but *matière pour rire*, did much cozen [trick] the world, for he came to the scaffold with good assurance and contempt of death. He said some short prayers after his Minister, and so out-prayed the company that helped to pray with him, that a stander by said he had a good mouth at a cry, but was nothing single. Some few words he used to express his sorrow for his offence to the King, and craved pardon of him and the world; for Sir Walter Raleigh, he took it, upon the hope of his soul’s resurrection, that what he had said of him was true, and with those words would have taken a short farewell of the world, with that constancy and boldness that we might see by him it is an easier matter to die well than live well; he was stayed by the Sheriff.” The reader is already acquainted with the termination of this extraordinary farce by Cobham receiving a reprieve, when, as all the bystanders expected, he was to be instantly beheaded. But what can be remarked, is the strong presumption (amounting, when all the circumstances are taken together, almost to proof) that Cobham was perfectly aware before he came to the scaffold that he was not to die, and that the price of this pardon was to be his solemn, and as it would then appear to the world, his dying accusation of Raleigh. When we compare the passage quoted above, describing his conduct on his trial, his poor and abject spirit, his fear and trembling, his long begging for life and favour, with this extraordinary metamorphosis into a courageous contempt of death, into a boldness and constancy of demeanour entirely foreign to his character, and with his servant asserting of

Raleigh's guilt upon his soul's resurrection, and his out-praying the company that helped to pray with him, the inference can scarcely be resisted, that this whole scene was orchestrated, that it was a piece of acting, the object of which was to convince the world, by the declaration of a dying associate, on how Raleigh was really guilty; and that Cobham's wonderful courage and contempt of death, which so perplexed and astonished the world, arose simply out of the circumstance that he knew beforehand he was not to die. It looks like some false promise was given to Cobham, by whom can only be speculated, that if his dying words on the scaffold were to condemn Raleigh in public, he would be pardoned at the last minute.

It is possible that in the private correspondence of Cecil preserved at Hatfield, as well as in the examinations of the priests Brooke, Grey, Cobham, and Markham, many links in the history of this extraordinary plot for the ruin of Raleigh might be supplied, and the exact mode by which Brooke became associated with those priests (Cobham entangled by Brooke, and Raleigh implicated by Cobham) traced step by step. It is a tantalizing reflection that stores exist in this country, both in public and in private repositories, from which, if opened up, a flood of light might be poured on some of the obscurest periods of British history. But they are locked up and inaccessible, as useless as a lamp in a sepulcher, if you will. In the present investigation, I have been cramped by the paucity of original and authentic materials, garbled examinations, anonymous letters without date or address, and insulated fragments and extracts, that have been the only guides, yet, followed with the patience and earnestness absolutely necessary for the elucidation of historical truth, they have led to two interesting results.

First, a portion of English history, pronounced by every preceding writer inexplicably and hopelessly obscure, has been rendered comparatively clear, consistent, and intelligible. We have seen the plot in its infancy, in its progress, and in its termination; and no doubt, that its authors were Howard and Cecil. Secondly, the fact that Raleigh was the victim of a conspiracy or State plot, and guiltless of the treason for which he suffered, has, been satisfactorily established. His real crime was, that he and Cobham were plotting, not against the King or the State, but against Cecil's power as a Minister; yet, to Cecil, it meant the same thing, and I may remark, that whilst he was guilty of only entertaining the proposal of a pension, or present of money from a foreign Statesman, it can be proved that the Ministers and Courtiers of James had unblushingly received bribes from the French Ambassador and also from the Spanish

envoy. It has been revealed of late, that Cecil was receiving a secret pension from Spain, the very time all these events were taking place.

II

Raleigh's School of Night

“Sir Walter arrived with his keeper, Mr. Blount. I assure you sir, his poor servants, to the number of a hundred and forty goodly men, and all the mariners, came to him with such shouts of joy as I never saw a man more troubled to quiet them in my life.”

—Robert Cecil ²⁹

“And truly,” Jean Pilehotte wrote, “if the school of Gauthier Raulay [Walter Raleigh] continues its present growth in propagating atheism, admitting for this purpose a certain necromancer and astrologer who lulls and beguiles the tender minds of the youthful nobility with the ingenious and agreeable fables by which he teaches them to scorn both Old and New Testament; if, I say, Raulay’s deceptions take root and he is called to participate in public affairs, as is said to be probable, since the Queen already looks on none more favourably than he (apart from Dudlay [Leicester] and Hatton), and has raised him from being a humble soldier of Ireland to the first rank in her Court, though he deserves it not; what are we to expect but a decree which will smack of the atheism and magic of this Epicurean and by which, on the Queen’s authority, the divine nature, and the confidence in the immortality of the soul, will be denied, and those who contradict or hesitate to accept this doctrine (fine and fair to those who wallow in the pleasures of the flesh) will be accused of *lèse majesté* and of disturbing the peace of the realm?” ³⁰ From Pilehotte’s reference, in his letter written in 1593, we see that Raleigh’s School of Night existed, though it has been stated, no evidence survives of this structure. It was Delia Bacon, who attempting in 1856 to dig up the relics of Elizabethan Wits, that believed the evidence lied “buried somewhere, perhaps in more places than one.” She believed the evidence pointed to a tomb; naively in Sir Francis Bacon’s tomb. However giddy such a prospect, especially for Baconians, there exists no tomb of Bacon’s according to today’s officials at

²⁹ In a letter written to Thomas Heneage, September 1592.

³⁰ At Lyon written by Jean Pilehotte (1593).

St. Michael's parish in St. Albans, Gorhambury. "Spenser's [tomb] I know contains, or did when it was closed, verses, and the pens that writ them, the verses of his brother poets, the poets of this school, Raleigh's school."³¹ Delia Bacon concluded, that came in her published work: *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakspeare Unfolded*,³² which was in form an octavo, of about seven hundred pages, including a hundred pages, separately numbered, of the author's Introduction and extracts from an altogether separate and unpublished *Life of Raleigh: Raleigh's School and The New Academy*.



Delia Bacon in May 1853

"That vast and secret foe, which Raleigh had arrayed against him on foreign battle fields, knew already what kind of embodiment of power this was that was rising into such sudden favour here at home, and would have crushed him in the germ that foe which would never rest till it had pursued him to the block, which was ready to join hands with his personal enemies in its machinations, in the Court of Elizabeth, as well as in the Court of her successor, that vast, malignant, indefatigable foe, in which the spirit of the old ages lurked, was already at his threshold, and penetrating to the

most secret chamber of his Councils. It was on the showing of a Jesuit that these friendly gatherings of young men at Raleigh's table came to be branded as a School of Atheism. And it was through such agencies, that his enemies at Court were able to sow suspicions in Elizabeth's mind in regard to the entire orthodoxy of his mode of explaining certain radical points in human belief, and in regard to the absolute conformity of his views on these points with those which she had herself divinely authorized, suspicions which he himself confesses he was never afterwards able to eradicate."³³

³¹ Theodore Bacon, Delia Bacon, A Biographical Sketch (1888).

³² Delia Bacon, *Philosophy of the Plays of Shakspeare Unfolded* (1857).

³³ Ibid.,

Raleigh, as a poet, belongs to the Elizabethan Court and is tagged as the most distinguished writer of that time. He was a generous patron of the arts and sciences, and the friend of many poets. Prince Henry, eldest son of King James, was an admirer of his mariner knowledge, ship building, and models of ships. Marlowe knew Raleigh; George Chapman was in Raleigh's circle; and, Ben Jonson was tutor to Raleigh's son. It is not surprising then, how we find many scholars who helped Raleigh to collect the material for his *History of the World*. During Elizabeth's Reign, Raleigh was ranked among the first love poets: Puttenham, Meres and Gabriel Harvey mention him as deservedly famous. And though in his imprisonment he wrote less poetry, his *History of the World* was meant to interest King James, but the Monarch condemned it as "too saucy in censuring the acts of Kings."

In 1662, Thomas Fuller in his *Worthies of England* offers a version of a poem written by Queen Elizabeth and the circumstances of its exchange with Raleigh who found some hopes of the Queen's favours reflecting upon him. This made him write on a glass window, obvious to the Queen's eye "Fain would I climb, yet fear I to fall." Elizabeth seeing it, wrote underneath: "If thy heart fails thee, climb not at all." We see from this example how poetry was an opportunity to combine wit and the pride of life, and Elizabeth demanded both. The atmosphere in which it was written was competitive, taut and lively. Cut-throat jests and desperate compliments were everywhere, and a fortune or a reputation might be made and lost overnight. As Edmund Burke noted, "Strip majesty of its externals and it is merely a jest," meaning: (m)ajest(y).

When Raleigh was yet a student of the Middle Temple, a friend wrote an anagram which afterwards grew very popular: "The foe to the stomach and the word of disgrace shows the name of the gentleman with the bold face. For Raleigh did not confine his assertion of superiority to his enemies or restrict it to the bitter bob. In his youth his companions were boisterous blades, but generally those that had wit, one was Charles Chester, a perpetual talker, made a noise like a drum in a room, so one time at a tavern Sir W.R. [Walter Raleigh] beats him and seals up his mouth, his upper and neather beard, with hard wax." In his youth, Raleigh had been several times jailed for brawling, as Ben Jonson, but Raleigh did not persist in the habit. In 1597, at the age of forty-five, he could rival the Earl of Essex in sporting enthusiasm at the attack on Cadiz, so Essex cast his hat into the sea out of joy when Raleigh at the harbour

called out “Entramos” but it was Raleigh who sailed into action answering the guns of the fort with scornful blares of the trumpet, and it was Raleigh who swung his ship athwart the channel that none of the other English commanders might take the lead of him that day.

Raleigh’s interest in scholarship led him to join or to found several learned societies. He was a member of Archbishop Parker’s Society of Antiquaries, the forerunner of the Royal Society with Sir Francis Bacon. This Society met every week for discussion. Camden and Selden were members, and here Raleigh formed friendships which were to stand him in good stead when he undertook to compile his *History of the World*. He is said to have founded Ben Jonson’s club at the Mermaid as well. In Elizabethan times, the licensing of plays evidently involved two questions, when they should be allowed, and what they should contain. Sometimes they were suppressed altogether; sometimes merely their content was restricted and censored. According to most stage historians, a proclamation in 1533 attempted to regulate the content of plays: “It forbade all evil-disposed persons to preach, either in public or private, after their own brains, and by playing of interludes and printing of false, fond books, ballads, rhymes, and other lewd treatises in the English tongue, concerning doctrines in matters now in question and controversy.” Were this true, it would be the earliest formal pronouncement concerning censorship. But no such edict was issued in 1533. This proclamation, as may be seen by a comparison of the phrasing, was announced by Queen Mary on August 18, 1553.

Among being a fantastic of history, philosophy and theology, Raleigh was also a known chemist, engaged in the search for an Elixir of Life, as Bacon for a Prolongation of Life stated in his *New Atlantis* and *Sylva Sylvarum*. The man who owns the fountain of youth controls the world, one could say, and these men knew this. Raleigh’s cordial, which in 1612 restored Prince Henry to a last flicker of consciousness, may have been compounded of quinine, though we have the recipe and event of that fateful day by Dr. Welwood, in his notes on Wilson’s life of James in his *Complete History of England*: “It [the cordial] was sent at the desire of the Queen, [Anne of Denmark,] who had received relief from it in a fever some time before. Raleigh sent with it a letter, expressing the tenderest concern for the Prince; and, boasting of his medicine, stumbled unluckily upon an expression to this purpose, that it would certainly cure him, or any other of a fever, except in case of poison. The Prince dying though he took it, the Queen in the agony of her grief, showed Raleigh’s letter, and lay so much weight on the expression about poison, that to her dying day, she could never be dissuaded

from the opinion that her beloved son had foul play.”³⁴ Raleigh’s expressions probably flowed from an overweening conceit in the force of his own medicine, but are perhaps to be numbered among the circumstances, which ensured his destruction. The report that the Prince was poisoned was extremely general. Some surmised that he was poisoned by a scent, but this Sir Charles Cornwallis, who wrote of the Prince’s death, considering the premises, thought that no such poison was prescribed. Raleigh’s cordial was afterwards celebrated, as is proved by the following extract from Evelyn’s *Diary*, September 20, 1662: “I accompanied his Majesty to M. Febure, his chymist, (and who had formerly been my master in Paris) to see his accurate preparation for the composing Sir Walter Raleigh’s rare cordial; he made a learned discourse before his Majesty in French on each ingredient: A compound of pearl, musk, hart’s horn (ammonia), bezoar stone (a concretion found in the intestine of ruminants), mint, borage, gentian, mace, aloes, sugar, sassafras, sprits of wine.”³⁵

During Raleigh’s voyages, he noted with care the medical remedies of the natives, and no doubt offered them to Bacon who was an enthusiast on experimental recipes, and on the one person Raleigh would be able to count upon, was Thomas Hariot. It was a friendship which was not without risk, for Hariot’s suspected traffic with the devil fitted in with the popular picture of Raleigh the Mischievous Machiavel. When in 1603 Raleigh was condemned, the judge in passing sentence flung at him his association with “the devil Hariot” as one of his notorious crimes. Anthony à Wood accuses Hariot of Deism, and goes on to say: “He had strange thoughts of the Scriptures, and always undervalued the old story of the creation of the world. He made a Philosophical Theology wherein he cast off the Old Testament, so that consequently the New would have no foundation.”

It is probable that Hariot was intellectually the backbone of Raleigh’s School of Night. He may also have been responsible for the enticing of the young gentlemen of which Parsons speaks of, for Raleigh was a mathematical tutor to many youths of distinguished families. Among others, Robert Sidney, Sir Philip’s “sweet Robyn.” There is no direct evidence for Hariot being irreligious. When in Virginia, he read the Bible to the Indians with fervour; and in 1616, under the pain of cancer of the lips, he wrote to his physician: “I believe in God Almighty, I believe that medicine was ordained by Him; I trust the physician as His minister.

³⁴ (Vol. II, p. 714).

³⁵ Memoirs (Vol. I, p. 340).

My faith is sure, my hope is firm. I wait however with patience for everything in its own time according to His providence. We must act earnestly, fight boldly, but in His name, and we shall conquer.” Collectors of rare English books speak reverently and even mysteriously of the “Quarto Hariot” as they do of Shakespeare’s First Folio in 1623. The former is given to but few of them ever to touch or to see it, for not more than seven copies were in existence in the late 1800’s. Even four of these were locked up in public libraries, whence they are never likely to pass into private hands, except upon library theft. One copy in the Grenville Library; another in the Bodleian; a third in the University of Leyden; a fourth in the Lenox Library; a fifth in Lord Taunton’s; a sixth in Henry Huth’s; and, a seventh copy produced £300 in 1883 in the Drake sale. The little quarto volume of Hariot’s Virginia is as important as it is rare, and as beautiful as it is important. Few English books of its time that it was published, 1588, surpass it either in typographic execution or literary merit. It was not probably thrown into the usual channels of commerce, as it bears the imprint of a privately-printed book, without the name or address of a publisher, and is not found entered in the Registers of Stationers’ Hall. It bears the arms of Sir Walter Raleigh on the reverse of the title, and is highly commended by Ralfe Lane, the late Governor of the Colony, who testifies “I dare boldly avouch it may very well pass with the credit of truth even amongst the most true relations of this age.” The book was manifestly put forth somewhat hurriedly to counteract, in influential quarters, certain slanders and aspersions spread abroad in England by some ignorant persons returned from Virginia, who “would seem to know so much as no men more, and who had little understanding, less discretion, and more tongue than was needful or requisite.”

Hariot’s book is dated on the last page as February 1588 Old Style (that is 1589 by present reckoning). Raleigh’s assignment is dated March 7 following. It is probable therefore that the “influential quarters” above referred to meant the assignment of Raleigh’s Charter which would have expired by the limitation of six years on March 24, 1590, if no colonists had been shipped or plantation attempted. It is possible also that Theodore De Bry’s presence in London, may have hastened the printing of the volume, since the little book professes to be only an epitome of what might be expected, for near the end the author says: “This is all the fruits of our labours, that I have thought necessary to advertise you of at present; I have ready in a discourse by itself in manner of a Chronicle according to the course of times, and when time shall be thought convenient, shall also be published.”

Thomas Hariot was born at Oxford, or as Anthony à Wood with more than his usual quaintness expresses it, “tumbled out of his mother’s womb into the lap of the Oxonian muses in 1560.” Hariot was a battler or commoner of St Mary’s Hall. He took the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1579, and in the latter end of that year completed his term in School Street. Nothing of his boyhood, or of his family, except a few hints in his last Will & Testament, has come to light. It is not known precisely at what time Hariot joined Raleigh, who was only eight years his senior. From what their friend Hakluyt says of them both, their intimate friendship and mutually serviceable connection were already an old story as early as 1587. From this early time for nearly forty years, till the morning of October 29, 1618, when Raleigh was beheaded, these two friends are found inseparable. Whether in prosperity or in adversity, in the Tower or on the scaffold, Raleigh always had his *Fidus Achates* to look after him and watch his interests. With a sharp wit, close mouth, and ready pen, Hariot was of inestimable service to his liberal patron. With rare attainments in the Greek and Latin Classics, and all branches of the abstract sciences, Hariot combined that perfect fidelity and honesty of character which placed him always above suspicion even to the enemies of Raleigh; Hariot was neither a politician nor Statesman, and therefore could be even in those times a faithful guide, philosopher, and friend to Raleigh.

In 1595, Hariot was mentioned as a distinguished man of science in a book, entitled: *Seaman’s Secrets*, written by Captain John Davis (navigator) who was a friend and partner of Raleigh. On July 11, 1596, Hariot under peculiar circumstances wrote a long and confidential letter to Sir Robert Cecil, who was then Chief Secretary of State. The letter contained the interests of Raleigh’s Guiana projects, just returning from Guiana, his first El Dorado expedition, in August 1595, and had in the meantime employed such energy and enterprise that within about five months he had fitted out and dispatched his second El Dorado fleet under his friend Captain Keymis. This second expedition returned to Plymouth in June 1596, a few days after Raleigh had gone with Essex and Howard of Effingham on that world-renowned expedition against Cadiz. Raleigh appears to have left his affairs in the hands of his ever faithful Hariot, and hence this sensible and timely letter in the absence of his patron. There appears to have been no complaint against Captain Keymis; but the master of his ship (Samuel Mace) seems to have been less discreet. The letter tells its own story, and gives a vivid picture

of the intelligent earnestness of Raleigh respecting Guiana, and at the same time the earnest intelligence of Hariot during Raleigh's absence in Spain.

Letter of Thomas Hariot To
Mr. Secretary Sir Robert Cecil.³⁶

Right Honourable Sir

These are to let you understand that whereas, according to your Honour's direction, I have been framing of a Chart out of some such of Sir Walter's notes and writings, which he hath left behind him, his principal Chart being carried with him, if it may please you, I do think most fit that the discovery of Captain Kemish [Keymis] be added, in his due place, before I finish it. It is of importance, and all Charts which had that coast before be very imperfect, as in many things else. And that of Sir Walter's, although it were better in that part than any other, yet it was done but by intelligence from the Indians, and this voyage was specially for the discovery of the same; which is, as I find, well and sufficiently performed. And because the secrecy of these matters doth much import her Majesty and this State, I pray let me be so bold as to crave that the dispatch of the plotting and describing be done only by me for you, according to the order of trust that Sir Walter left with me, before his departure, in that behalf, and as he hath usually done heretofore. If your Honour have any notes from Sir Thomas Baskerville, if it may please you to make me acquainted with them, that which they will manifest of other particularities than that before Sir Walter hath described shall also be set down.

Although Captain Kemish be not come home rich, yet he hath done the special thing which he was enjoined to do, as the discovery of the coast betwixt the river of Amazons and Orinoco, where are many goodly harbours for the greatest ships her Majesty hath and any number; where there are great rivers, and more than probability of great good to be done by them for Guiana, as by any other way or to other rich countries bordering upon it. As also, the discovery of the mouth of Orinoco itself, a good harbour and free passage for ingresses and egresses of most of the ordinary ships of England, above three hundred miles into the country. Insomuch that Berreo wondered much of our men's coming up so far; so that it seemeth they know not of

³⁶ From the original holograph in the Cecil Papers at Hatfield, Vol. XLIII. It was first printed in Edward's Life of Raleigh (Vol. II, p. 420).

that passage. Neither could they, or can possibly find it from Trinidad; from whence usually they have made their discoveries. But if it be done by them the shortest way, it must be done out of Spain.

Now, if it shall please her Majesty to undertake the enterprise, or permit it in her subjects, by her order, countenance, and authority, for the supplanting of those that are now gotten thither, I think it of great importance to keep that which is done as secretly as we may, lest the Spaniards learn to know those harbours and entrances, and work to prevent us. And because I understand that the Master of the ship with Captain Kemish is somewhat careless of this, by giving and selling copies of his travels and plots of discoveries, I thought it my duty to remember it unto your wisdom, that some order might be taken for the prevention of such inconveniences as may thereby follow: By giving authority to some justice, or the Mayor, to call him before them, and to take all his writings and charts or papers that concern this discovery, or any else, in other men's hands, that he hath sold or conveyed them into; and to send them sealed to your Honour, as also to take bond for his further secrecy on that behalf. And the like order to be taken by those others, as we shall further inform your Honour of, that have any such plots, which yet, for mine own part, I know not of; or any other order, by sending for him up or otherwise, as to your wisdom shall seem best.

Concerning the Eldorado which hath been showed your Honour out of the Spanish book of Acosta, which you had from Wright, and I have seen, when I shall have that favour as but to speak with you I shall show you that it is not ours, that we mean, there being three. Nether doth he say, or mean, that Amazons River and Orinoco is all one, as some, I fear, do averse to your Honour; as by good proof out of that book alone I can make manifest; and by other means besides than this discovery, I can put it out of all doubt.

To be brief, I am at your Honour's commandment in love and duty farther than I can solemnly express for haste. I will wait upon you at Court, or here at London, about any of these matters or any others, at any time, if I might have but that favour as to hear so much. I dare not presume of myself, for some former respects. My fidelity hath never been impeached, and I take that order that it never shall. I make no application. And I beseech your Honour to pardon my boldness, because of haste. My meaning is always good. And so I most humbly take my leave. This Sunday, 11th of July 1596.

Your Honour's most ready at commandment in all services I may,
Tho. Hariot.

Addressed: To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Cecil, Knight Principal Secretary to Her Majesty, these endorsed: 11 July, 1596.

Mr Hariot to my Master.

Cecil lost no time in acting upon Hariot's suggestions. On July 31, Sir George Trenchard and Sir Ralph Horsey wrote to Cecil from Dorchester in reply to his instructions, that they had seized the charts and books of the India Voyage to Guiana from one Samuel Mace and William Downe, which they would send to him if desired. They were desired, and accordingly sent by post on August 10. A few days later, Raleigh returned to Plymouth with the first glorious news of the success of the English fleet at Cadiz; which news completely turned the heads of the people of England one way, and those of the Queen and the hungry politicians the other.

At what precise time Hariot, who never deserted Raleigh, became acquainted with Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, does not appear. It is known, however, that there was an intimacy between Raleigh and Percy as early as 1586, when Raleigh presented the Earl with a coat of mail on his going over to Flanders, and soon after a bedstead made of cedar from Virginia; while the Earl about the same time gave to Raleigh a "store coloured velvet saddle." The earliest mention of Hariot's name in connection with that of the Earl is in 1596, in the Earl's pay-rolls, still preserved at Sion, and described in the Sixth Report of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts (p. 227): "To Mr. Herytt for a book of the Turk's pictures, 7s." It appears from the same rolls that from Michaelmas 1597 to 1610, if not earlier and later, an annual pension of £80 was paid to Hariot by the Earl. This pension was probably continued as long as Hariot lived; and besides there are not wanting many marks of the Earl's liberality, friendship, and love for his companion and pensioner, who was long known as "Hariot of Sion on Thames" as expressed on his monument. In the Earl's accounts for 1608 there is this entry: "Payment for repairing and finishing Mr Heriotts house at Sion."

The Earl of Northumberland was a great book-collector, as appears by his payrolls. Books were carried from Sion to the Tower and back again, probably not only for the Earl's own use when in captivity, but also for Raleigh's use in his writing of the *History of the World*.

Many of these books, it is understood, are still preserved at Petworth, then and subsequently one of the Earl's seats that were later occupied by the Earl of Leconsfield.

Raleigh's imprisonment dragged long and as tersely and truly expressed by his son was, after thirteen years, beheaded for opposing the very thing he was condemned and sentenced for favouring. The whole story is a bundle of inconsistencies, like that of Henry Percy, the 9th Earl of Northumberland, committed to the Tower in 1606, and his fifteen years' imprisonment. The stories of these two celebrated men are inseparably connected with that of Hariot.

Another member of Raleigh's School of Night, was the already mentioned, Lawrence Keymis, a scholar and a sailor. He had been made a Fellow of Ballio in 1583; later he became Notary and Bursar, and remained Fellow till 1591. He was skilled in geography and mathematics to a fair degree. He could turn a neat Latin verse and must have been a man of general culture. In 1595 he accompanied Raleigh on a voyage to Guiana; he led the expedition of 1596 and wrote an account of it when he returned. For the rest of his life, Captain Keymis devoted himself to the service of Raleigh, regardless of the above-mentioned letter from Hariot to Robert Cecil about Keymis' unnatural activities in 1596; Raleigh was imprisoned for him in 1603. And this emerges in one of the bypasses during Raleigh's trial:

Raleigh. This poor man (Keymis) hath been close prisoner these eighteen weeks. He was offered the rack to make him confess.

Lord Henry Howard. No circumstance moveth me more than this: Keymishe was never at the rack. The King gave charge that no rigour should be used.

The Other Commissioners. We protest before God, there was no such matter to our knowledge.

Raleigh. Was not the keeper of the rack sent for: and he threatened with it?

Sir William Waad. When Mr. Solicitor and myself came to examine Keymishe we told him "he deserved the rack" but did not threaten him with it.

The Other Commissioners. It was more than we knew.

During the years in the Tower, Keymis, like Hariot, acted as Raleigh's Agent. He advised Lady Raleigh about the management of the states, and became one of the trustees for Sherborne. It was chiefly on his information that the last expedition of Guiana was undertaken,

and when Raleigh fell sick on the coast, he led the expedition up-country in which young Raleigh was killed. In public, Keymis was hated, but the personal servants and the sailors whom he commanded were always loyal to him. At his execution he remembered a cook who had been accused of poisoning him, but who, having once been his servant, he was sure would go a thousand miles to do him good. Raleigh's relations with Keymis are as significant in their personal implications as those with Hariot. Such were the men who gathered in Raleigh's house for discussion.